

Remarks:

In response to the final office action dated December 17, 2003, Applicant requests continued examination of the above-referenced case.

In response to the outstanding rejections, Applicant has amended the claims herein to overcome the cited art. Applicant has amended claim 1 to require that the guide member be elongate, and that the support arm includes "a substantially U-shaped portion extending in a plane intersecting and transverse to an orientation of said guide member and a coplanar substantially linear portion extending across said guide member." None of the cited references teaches an apparatus having these claimed features. In particular, the claimed spatial orientation and design of the support arm and guide member is not taught. Moreover, by positioning the support arm as in claim 1, the tool is designed such that it can accommodate the body piece in positions between a substantially zero width cutting width, and a plurality of greater cutting widths. Claim 1 further requires that the body piece is slidable "across said guide member," and that the guide member and support arm define a space therebetween. Neither Thomas nor Aurness teaches a design wherein the body piece can slide "across" the guide member, or defines a space between the guide member and support arm, as presently claimed. In Applicant's Figure 1, it is apparent that body piece 20 can reside on either side of support arm 18, and is capable of doing so because of the clearance both above and to opposite sides of guide member 14. Accordingly, the rejections to claim 1 and the claims dependent thereto are overcome.

Applicant has further amended claim 7 to require the step of "sliding the workpiece edge through the channel, thereby engaging the cutter therewith along a cut line oriented substantially parallel the guide member to effect a cutting or scoring of the workpiece." Thus, the claimed method is distinguishable over Thomas in view of the orientation of the resulting cut line during use. Further, the claim requires that in the second, providing step the body piece is slidable on the support arm "between a first position at which said body piece and cutter are adjacent the guide member" and a second position. Neither of the cited references teaches a body piece slidable on a support arm in the claimed fashion. The rejections to claim 7 and 8 are overcome, and withdrawal of the same is respectfully requested.

Applicant has also amended claim 9 to recite several additional limitations. As amended, claim 9 requires that the guide member be "elongate," and further requires that the guide member defines a "longitudinal axis." Thomas teaches neither of these limitations. Claim 9 is also limited to a design wherein the support arm lies "substantially in a plane intersecting and transverse to said axis." This limitation is similar to the limitation added to claim 1, and is not taught by the cited references. The rejection to claim 9 and the claims dependent thereto is overcome, and withdrawal of the same is respectfully requested.

Claim 12 has been amended, and requires: "two opposed cutter wheels, each having cutting edges lying substantially in a plane that is parallel an orientation of said guide member." Neither of Thomas nor Aurness teaches an apparatus having cutting wheels with edges in a plane parallel to the guide member. Claim 12 also requires: "said linear portion is sufficiently displaced from said guide member to accommodate said body piece at either of the first and second sides thereof. The cited references do not teach or suggest this limitation. Accordingly, the rejections to claim 12 and the claims dependent thereto are overcome, and withdrawal of the same is respectfully requested.

Applicant has also added new claim 18. Claim 18 is similar to the original claims, and the limitations respecting the support arm are set forth in such a way as to distinguish the cited references. In particular, claim 18 requires:

[A] support arm lying substantially in a plane intersecting and transverse to said axis, said support arm comprising a substantially arcuate portion extending from said first side of said guide member, and a substantially linear portion extending across and spaced from said guide member...

Claim 18 thus teaches a tool wherein the support arm lies in a plane intersecting and transverse to the axis of the guide member, and includes a linear portion spaced therefrom. These limitations are not taught by the cited references.

WHEREFORE, all the submitted claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, which is respectfully solicited. If the Applicant may provide any further information or assist in the prosecution of this application in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (248) 364-2100.

Respectfully submitted



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